

# **Midwest Food Products Association: Midwest food manufacturers, ag organizations urge USTR to accelerate access in U.S.-Japan trade deal**

Posted on Thursday, Apr 25, 2019

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The Midwest Food Products Association ( MWFPA ) joined nearly 90 agricultural organizations in urging the U.S. Trade Representative to negotiate a trade deal with Japan that restores, expands and accelerates meaningful access for U.S. food and agricultural products.

“As the fourth largest market for U.S. agricultural products, improved access to Japan is imperative for the continued growth of the sector and the millions of American jobs it helps support,” states the letter to U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer.

MWFPA and the other agricultural groups noted that the U.S. food and agriculture

industry is increasingly becoming disadvantaged by competing regional and bilateral agreements that Japan already has negotiated and begun implementing, including the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the European Union-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EU-Japan EPA).

“In recent weeks, Japan cut tariffs for the second time on agricultural imports from the European Union and CPTPP member countries,” the letter states.

“As a result, U.S. exporters of wheat, beef, pork, dairy, wine, potatoes, fruits and vegetables, and other products are facing collapse of their Japanese market share as these lucrative sales are handed over to their competitors.”

A trade agreement with Japan must include market access provisions that at least equal the terms of the CPTPP and the EU-Japan EPA in the first stage of implementation, the groups said.

The letter also stipulates that a trade agreement must include an accelerated phase-in of tariff cuts “to ensure the U.S. is not facing a disadvantage on tariff or TRQ quantity access compared to other countries.”

USTR in December 2018 issued a list of U.S. negotiating objectives with Japan, which include many of the agriculture industry’s requests.